



## **The Florida House of Representatives**

### **For Immediate Release:**

Wednesday, February 9, 2011

### **Contact:**

Lyndsey Cruley, (850) 487-8148

### **Michelle Rhee Addresses House K-20 Competitiveness Subcommittee**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – The Florida House of Representatives K-20 Competitiveness Subcommittee, chaired by Representative Erik Fresen (R-Miami), today welcomed Michelle Rhee, former chancellor of the District of Columbia public school system and founder of StudentsFirst, to deliver testimony on teacher quality reform.

“I thank Ms. Rhee for sharing with us today her thoughts and experiences on teacher quality,” said Representative Bill Proctor (R-St. Augustine), chair of the House Education Committee. “Implementing teacher quality measures will certainly be a critical part of the discussion as the upcoming legislative session approaches, and I look forward to this ongoing conversation among teachers, parents, school administrators, education leaders and the public.”

“Florida has become a national leader in education reform, however it is critical to our state’s future that we continue to aggressively advocate for reforms so that every child has a quality teacher,” said Representative Fresen. “By taking the necessary steps to retain quality teachers in every Florida classroom we will undoubtedly continue to see increases in student achievement, close the achievement gap and prepare our state’s children for careers in the global marketplace.”

“I would like to thank all the members of the Florida House who attended today’s meeting,” continued Representative Fresen. “Teacher quality is an issue that affects all members of the Florida Legislature not only as lawmakers, but for many of us as parents. It was refreshing to see so many members engaged in this discussion early-on in the legislative process, and we look forward to providing updates as we move forward toward drafting, debating and passing comprehensive teacher quality legislation this year.”

Michelle Rhee, who currently serves as an informal advisor on education to Governor Rick Scott, is the founder of StudentsFirst, an organization formed in 2010 in response to an increasing demand for a better education system in America. Prior to that, Rhee served as the

chancellor of the District of Columbia public schools system of Washington, where she aggressively sought to reform a school system whose students historically produced below-average test scores. During her time as chancellor, Rhee increased the graduation rate by 3 percent, increased reading pass rates by 14 percent, and increased math pass rates by 17 percent.

In 1997, Rhee founded The New Teacher Project (TNTP) to bring more high-quality teachers to classrooms across the country. As Chief Executive Officer and President, Rhee partnered with school districts, state education agencies, non-profit organizations and unions to transform the way schools and other organizations recruit, select and train highly qualified teachers in difficult-to-staff schools. Through her work widespread reform was implemented in teacher hiring practices, improving teacher hiring in Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Miami, New York, Oakland and Philadelphia. TNTP placed 23,000 new, high-quality teachers in these schools across the country.

Prior to founding TNTP, Rhee was a Teach for America corps member in a Harlem Park Community School in Baltimore City.

# # #